

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 ARA-10 EUR-12 /110 W

-----041939 081348Z /47

R 081128Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1989

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

US MISSION USUN 1135

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3459

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER INFO ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PORG, SG, SA

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE

REF: (A) DAKAR 3213 (B) DAKAR 3305 (C) DAKAR 3306

1. OFFICIAL AT JIDDA HEADQUARTERS OF ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT GAVE EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER REPORT ON WORK OF DAKAR CONFERENCE. MUCH OF HIS INFORMATION REPEATS WHAT DAKAR REPORTED IN ITS DETAILED AND INFORMATIVE REFTELS, BUT SOME OF HIS STATEMENTS PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS INTO CONFERENCE EVENTS.

2. AS NOTED REF A, CONTROVERSY WAS LIMITED TO POLITICAL
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RESOLUTIONS. SECRETARIAT POLITICAL COMMITTEE HAD PREPARED TWENTY DRAFT RESOLUTIONS, TO WHICH THREE WERE ADDED DURING CONFERENCE. ONLY ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION OF SUBSTANCE WAS SOMALI-SPONSORED MEASURE ON HORN OF AFRICA (DISCUSSED PARA 3, REF B) WHICH WAS ADOPTED THANKS TO ITS AVOIDING EXPLICITLY NAMING CUBA AND USSR, ITS MODERATE LANGUAGE, AND SUPPORT FROM IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND

SUDAN.

3. EGYPT WAS PREPARED TO SUBMIT DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ERITREA CALLING FOR SUPPORT FOR MUSLIMS OF THAT REGION AND URGING ACTION TO AVOID BLOODBATH. HOWEVER, THIS PROPOSAL, FACED WITH UNANIMOUS OPPOSITION FROM AFRICAN DELEGATIONS, WAS NEVER EVEN DISTRIBUTED TO DELEGATES AS DRAFT RESOLUTION.

4. CONTEST BETWEEN SECRETARIAT AND PLO DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON MIDDLE EAST (REF A, PARAS 8-10) RESULTED IN COMPLETE VICTORY FOR PLO. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY'S SOURCE, STEAM-ROLLER TACTICS OF PLO AND ITS ALLIES EASILY OVERCAME SAUDI ATTEMPTS TO MODIFY RESOLUTION. PLO METHOD WAS TO EQUATE PALESTINIAN AND ISLAMIC CAUSES AND TO LABEL ANY OPPOSITION TO PLO DRAFT RESOLUTION AS ANTI-MUSLIM. EMBASSY'S SOURCE NOTED THAT NON-ARAB MODERATE DELEGATIONS SAT ON THEIR HANDS THROUGHOUT THIS DEBATE AND THAT SAUDIS ALONE WERE UNABLE TO RESIST WHAT HE (OUR SOURCE) CALLED "TACTICS OF BLACKMAIL AND INTIMIDATION". WHEN SAUDIS PROPOSED INCLUDING CONDEMNATION OF USSR FOR ITS INTERFERENCE IN MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, THEY WERE SHOUTED DOWN WITH CRIES OF "WHAT KIND OF ISLAM IS THIS?" BOTH CHAD AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD PLANNED TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS TO MIDDLE EAST DRAFT RESOLUTION BUT MCCARTHYITE METHODS OF PLO REP ("IF YOU HAVE ANY RESERVATIONS OF THIS RESOLU-
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TION, THEN YOU MUST HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ISLAM") SILENCED ALL POTENTIAL DISSENT BY EQUATING DESAGREEMENT WITH HERESY, A MATTER OF GREAT SENSITIVITY TO THE SAUDIS.

5. IMPRESSIONS: IN CONTRAST TO DAKAR'S REPORTS, EMBASSY SOURCE FELT THAT ALGERIANS WERE BOTH EFFECTIVE AND ARTICULATE IN DEBATE AND WERE MOST EFFECTIVE SPOKESMAN FOR HARD-LINE POSITIONS. BY CONTRAST, SAUDIS WERE GENERALLY TOO SOFT SPOKEN AND POLITE TO BE EFFECTIVE AND, AS A RESULT, WERE USUALLY OUTMANEUVERED BY ALGERIANS. EMBASSY SOURCE WAS DISGUSTED AND DISCOURAGED BY ATMOSPHERE OF INTIMIDATION AT CONFERENCE AND SAID THAT MANY DELEGATES SHARED HIS ATTITUDE. THEY FELT THAT ANY OPPOSITION TO PLO AND ITS ALLIES WOULD BE USELESS AND GAIN ONLY ACCUSATIONS OF HERESY. IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE, MANY DELEGATIONS CHOSE SILENCE AND INDIFFERENCE RATHER THAN BECOME EMBROILED IN NAME-CALLING SESSIONS.
WILEY

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